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The

WHY

OF

CIVIL SERVICE

ISSUED BY THE
WISCONSIN CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
1915

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THE WHY

OF

CIVIL SERVICE

EARLY DAYS.

Wisconsin was under territorial government for ten years.

On April 17, 1846 the people of the territory showed their desire to enter the union as a state. The popular vote was 12,334 for with 2,487 against.

The First Convention.

August 1, 1846, Mr. Dodge, governor of the territory issued a proclamation calling for a convention of 124 delegates to draft a constitution.

The convention was an able body. The speeches were of an exceptionally high order of excellence.

In the convention were 69 farmers and 26 lawyers. We are proud of the citizenship of Wisconsin. We are proud that she is known abroad as an agricultural state.

The Constitution Submitted.

When this constitution was submitted to vote of the people April 5, 1847 it was defeated by a vote of 20,231 to 14,119. The contest is said to have been an exciting one.

The contest was over the articles relating to

Banks,
Exemptions,
Elective judiciary,
Rights of married women,
Size of the legislature.

The people did not all see these problems in the same light. Yet who will doubt but that practically all were voting for the right as they saw it?

The Second Convention.

On December 15, 1847 the second constitutional convention came together. Only six of those who served at the first convention were among those of this second convention.

On March 13, 1848 the constitution drafted by this second convention was adopted by popular vote with 16,799 ayes and 6,384 nays.

May 29, 1848 was the day when by act of congress and approval of President Polk, Wisconsin entered the union as a state.

WISCONSIN BEGINS BUSINESS—JUNE 7, 1848.

Governor Nelson Dewey and his fellow officials were sworn into office, and the legislature opened its first session.

Bright Prospects.

The people of Wisconsin were in business for themselves. Their faith in their future was strong. The high ideal for the state's development was felt by all. Wisconsin was to be a true mother of her own, and a loyal member of the Union. Her opportunities were of the richest, and her responsibilities were not few in number.

Representative Government.

From each neighborhood throughout the state the people sent representatives to the capitol at Madison.

These representatives, called Senators and Assemblymen were to advise together in mak-

ing those laws, which would conform with the spirit of the constitution and would safeguard the interests of the people of the state, and conserve her wealth and resources.

Ever since the time of the first legislature in 1848 the people have been regularly sending representatives to the capitol to confer on matters of common interest.

BUSINESS UNDER WAY.

These representatives saw many things that needed to be done. Their successors have seen many more. The state government must function in many ways.

What are some of the things these representatives have had to think about, and concerning which they have taken action?

Education.—Education is the backbone of a democracy. The people of Wisconsin believe in the common school. They believe in a system of free and public education, in equal opportunity to all.

In 1844 a Rhode Island farmer told Henry Barnard that it would be as sensible to propose to take his plough away from him to plough his neighbor's field as to take his money to educate his neighbor's children.

Wisconsin people have not felt as did this Rhode Island farmer. The people's representa-

tives gladly took upon themselves the responsibility of public education, and a big responsibility it was.

Public Health.—The representatives of the people further believed that the state ought to do all in its power to prevent the spread of disease and remove all possible causes of sickness. In accord with this belief a health department was established.

Professor Smith in his book on Social Pathology says: "The time may come when the disgrace of being sick must be borne with a sense of shame by the family or the community."

Prisons and Asylums.—In every community are those weak morally and those unbalanced mentally. They must not be allowed to run at large. It seemed right that the state provide places where they could be brought together, kept from being of danger to society and if possible, restored to normal condition. And so these reperesentatives voted institutions of this kind, and additional institutions as the need arose.

Industrial Welfare.—"The note of the old legislation was the protection of things; the note of the new legislation is the protection of men."

The workmen of the state must be protected. The people of Wisconsin believe in the common folks. That is what they are themselves. They were going to see to it that their brothers in the factories and in the various industries should have a square deal and not be oppressed by overbearing employers or subjected to unnecessary danger. So laws were made providing for just treatment of workmen.

Other Activities.—Many other activities were suggested. Your representatives investigated conditions and where they found a real need, laws were passed providing for the satisfaction of such need.

Then from the start there were activities of a business nature that must be attended to. The work of the state must be financed, taxes must be apportioned and collected, and adequate records of the action of the representatives must be kept.

MUCH TO DO BUT WHO SHOULD DO IT?

All this work required organization. Plans had to be made. Many details must be looked after.

There must be administrative heads. There must be supervisors, inspectors, and professional advisors. There must be bookkeepers, clerks, and stenographers, janitors, custodians, guards and common laborers.

Your representatives saw the need of all this good work. They made the laws. Who was to carry on the work and look after the details, handle the money and turn it into satisfactory results?

"For forms of government fools contest,
Whatever is best administered is best."

The representatives must return to look after their own business interests. Who should fill all these positions? You have not had any

say as to who should carry on at first hand all this business of the state.

The men who actually handle the money you pay in taxes to the state, who do the work you wish done, are not chosen by you.

Did your representatives choose them? Perhaps.

TAKING THE MATTER HOME.

There is no need of thinking in the abstract. Just take the matter home. Find an example in your own community and think about the conditions seriously.

The representative from your district, a man of high principles, was backed by one or another of the political parties. Perhaps there was a real party boss with a well-organized machine of spoils fed henchmen behind him. Perhaps your representative was strongly backed by the saloonkeeper around the corner or the financier who so liberally put up the money during the campaign.

If they are to continue in their support of the party, they must receive some of the spoils, and they it is who dictated largely whom your representative should strive to locate in certain of these state positions. In fact, your representatives selected very few of them, and you, the taxpayer, had no voice in the matter.

In most states those who carry on the work which the lawmakers start, are the friends of the political financier, the boss, and the ward politician.

Some of these appointees may be were efficient, but many were inefficient. It was a matter of chance, for friendship was the primary criterion.

This is "Democracy Deformed". The "Black Peril of the Rule of the Boss."

The slogan of these politicians was: "To the victor belongs the spoils", and they worked it with a vengeance.

THEY PAID PARTY BILLS FROM THE PUBLIC TREASURY.

This system of the Bone Hunting politicians was pernicious and rotten throughout. Many were its demoralizing results.

There were useless positions created to pay political debts.

There were inefficient men in all classes of position, who drew big salaries and did little work.

The administrative heads were handicapped by the system. They must employ as assistants those who were designated by the politicians.

Much of the work of the state was carried on in a way that no real business man would tolerate in his own establishment for a day.

The people of the state paid thousands of dollars for errors and loss of time due to this system of inefficiency.

THE DANGERS OF THE SPOILS SYSTEM.

"One of Boston's aldermen has a brother who drew $2.50 a day as a provisional inspector of lumber, and who did not inspect any lumber.

Eventually this brother was appointed provisional caretaker of horses and his wages increased to $1,400 a year.

The Civil Service Commission held an examination, but the alderman's brother failed to obtain a place on the eligible list. It was thereupon found that the position of caretaker of horses at $1,400 was not necessary and no one was appointed, a saving to the city of $1,400."
—Good Government.

Professor Willis L. Moore, chief of the United States Weather Bureau, speaking of the time before the passing of the Civil Service law said: "I do not hesitate to say, corruption

was rampant in almost every branch of the public service. A man could sell nothing to the government from which somebody did not get a rake-off, all the way from the receiving clerk up—very high up, sometimes.

Furthermore, at that time for every position there were several unnecessary men, and probably not more than one out of ten competent to perform his duties.''

During the campaign of Garfield and Arthur, assessments were openly levied upon office-holders throughout the country. ''A New York Police Justice took a room at the Astor House, took off his coat, sent for all the clerks in the Post Office across the street, and levied a tax on each.''—E. P. Wheeler.

It has been reported that William M. Tweed, who reigned over the city of New York for seven years, stole $6,000,000 or more for himself and $60,000,000 or more for his followers.

It was found that in Illinois there were thirty legislative employes hired to open and

shut ventilators, and that a great number of these employes did not take the trouble to show up at all, they simply drew their pay.

Wisconsin has had experiences similar to these, and the taxpayers have paid for them.

Carl Schurz, who lived for many years at Watertown, Wis., said: "So long as public offices are a matter of patronage to any extent, so long will that patronage exercise a demoralizing influence and constitute a most serious danger to the working of our democratic institutions."

THE CHANGE.

Most all thoughtful folks, even though they may have been in the clutches of this pernicious system, really agree that all the business of the state should be carried on in a strict business-like way. Party beliefs may differ but in this the people are agreed.

Public opinion crystallized and in 1905 your representatives said: "To the victor belongs the spoils" is a pernicious slogan. Parties there may be, but party strife shall not interfere with the state's service to the people.

The spoils system is not necessary to party organization. In England the patronage system was thoroughly abolished. In Germany there are political parties without the slightest vestige of party patronage.

The patronage system with its sordid selfishness diverts political parties from accomplishing their highest purpose.

"Who will dare to say that only the citi-

zens of this great republic have become so depraved as to be incapable of forming and maintaining political parties without being paid for it with the spoils of office?''—Carl Schurz.

No person should serve the state who does not give value received.

The person who can serve the people of the state most efficiently in a given position should be appointed to that position irrespective of political affiliation.

All who desire a position should show their fitness in some sort of competitive examination, and the appointment should be made from those standing highest in this examination.

When a person has once entered the Civil Service of the state he should not be removed from office for political reasons, that is with change of administration, but only because of inefficient service.

Your representatives specified to what lines of state service this law should apply, and created a Civil Service Commission to look after the administration of this law.

THE RESULTS.

Civil Service Administration is nonpartisan.

Any person may try for a state position under Civil Service, knowing that ability and not "pull" will decide whether or not he is appointed to the service.

The tax-payers are saved thousands of dollars because those in the various offices of the state know their business. They have shown their ability in examination. Their past record and experience have been carefully investigated.

With each change of administration a new office force does not have to be broken in. Tenure of office is increased. This item alone saves the state many dollars.

Business houses realize that the loss of an efficient employe, and the breaking in of a new one means money loss.

The office of second assistant secretary of the United States is a political position the

same as is that of secretary of state and yet Mr. A. A. Adee, who was appointed by President Cleveland in 1886, still holds the position. He has held the position continuously for 28 years. He knows so much about the work of the department that they can't get along without him. He gives stability and continuity to the work.

State employes who are efficient under Civil Service hold over from one administration to another, become more and more efficient, and give stability to the work of the various state departments.

In 1904, before the enactment of the State Civil Service Law, of those in office in ten departments only 18 per cent had held over from 1900.

In 1914, after the enactment of the Civil Service law, it is found that 58% of those in office in the same departments had held over from 1910.

In many of the state departments of Wisconsin the amount of work has doubled or

trebled since the enactment of the Civil Service law, and yet the departmental force has increased very little proportionately.

In the office of the state treasurer the office force has even been decreased, and yet the amount of business done has greatly increased.

All this means increased efficiency although there is yet plenty of chance for improvement.

Legislative Employes.

In most states much money is wasted on legislative employes.

Wisconsin and Colorado are the only states where legislative employes are under Civil Service.

In the 1912 report of the Wisconsin Civil Service Commission was the following chart showing the comparative daily salarly of legislative employes in nine states.

DAILY SALARY COST LEGISLATIVE EMPLOYES.

WISCONSIN IS UNDER CIVIL SERVICE

Wisconsin _____ **$$$$$$$ — 313.00**

Iowa _____ **$$$$$$$$$$$$ —564.62**

Oregon _____ **$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$ —685.73**

Minnesota _____ **$$$$$$$$$ $$$$$$$$ —718.69**

Illinois _____ **$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$ $$$$$$ —891.47**

California _____ **$$$$$$$$$ $$$$$$$$$$$$$$$ —998.50**

Pennsylvania ___ **$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$ — 1,172.00**

Maryland _____ **$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$ —1,365.85**

New York _____ **$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$ $$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$ — 1,551.00**

Think these things over. Talk them over. Find out more about them.

The next issue of these booklets will be—

"THE WHAT OF CIVIL SERVICE."

Any of the following publications of the Wisconsin Civil Service Commission will be sent on request.

"MANUAL OF COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS."

"SPECIMEN EXAMINATION QUESTIONS."

"LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS."

Persons interested in any examination are requested to write the commission, specifying the kind of examination desired so that application blanks and circulars may be forwarded to them as soon as examination dates are fixed.

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